The holidays are here and with the festivities comes lots of food to enjoy. Here’s some interesting research findings on holiday eating.

- Each guest adds 35 calories to your own food intake.
- Enjoy holiday music? Those festive tunes can add 100 calories to your food intake.
- It’s game time! Eating during the game adds another 140 calories.

Needless to say, it all adds up. And skipping meals prior to the big feast will only make you eat more. So try these tricks to minimize over-eating.

- Slow down! Put your fork down between bites.
- Nibble on holiday treats along with low-calorie foods.
- Don’t feel obligated to eat every food. Save room for the special treats and avoid the mundane foods.
- Planning the menu? Fill half of the menu with low-calorie fruit and vegetables dishes.
- After eating, go take a walk! That will help burn off those extra bites.

Source: Tufts Health & Nutrition Letter, Nov. 2013
What is Freekeh?

Riding on new-found popularity, the ancient grain freekeh is showing up in restaurants and on grocery shelves.

Freekeh (pronounce free-kah), means “to rub.” This refers to how it is made, not a specific grain. Young green grains (usually wheat) are parched, roasted and rubbed. They hold their maximum nutritional value, flavor and texture.

Freekeh dates back to ancient Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. People worried about losing crops and starvation, so they harvested green grains and stored them. Sadly, fire destroyed their village and the green grains were burnt. But, instead of throwing out the grain, they rubbed the grains and found it edible and delicious.

Resources:
- Whole Grains Council
- Michigan State University
- Penn State University
- Eatright.org

Keep Potlucks Safe

Potlucks are great community events. But they can lead to foodborne illness when food is not handled safely. This was true at an October 2013 church potluck in Nevada that sickened about 150 people age 7 months to 88 with Salmonella. Symptoms included aches, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

For information on food safety for large groups, see www.foodsafety.gov/keep/events/parties/index.html

Source: On Food and Cooking, The Science and Lore of the Kitchen, by Harold McGee

Why Quince Turns Red

Quince is a tree fruit that looks similar to pears. They are very astringent raw, but when cooked they become edible. Fruit should be all yellow and firm when picked. Common uses are sweet spreads and preserves.

When cooked, the fruit changes color from creamy white to light pink or dark red. This is due to tannins within the fruit that react with heat, acidity and oxygen to release the red pigment anthocyanin. The color intensity depends on the amount of tannin content. Using an aluminum pan can yield darker red color.

Source: On Food and Cooking, The Science and Lore of the Kitchen, by Harold McGee
Dangers of Homemade Infant Formula

Parents want to feed children the safest food possible. But some have taken the risk of feeding homemade infant formula which can be dangerous.

Advocates of this practice claim that homemade infant formula avoids using ingredients produced with biotechnology among other claims. This is dangerous because some recipes tend to include raw milk which, is a food safety risk. They also have poor nutritional content and can lead to poor growth and development.

The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly discourages parents from using homemade infant formula. When mothers cannot breast feed, commercial infant formula is the “only safe source of food for nonbreastfed infants up to 6 months old and an important food source for nonbreastfed infants through their first year.” Commercial formula is thoroughly tested for safety and nutritional quality. All formulas must comply with the Infant Formula Act to safeguard all babies when consuming the formula.

Source: www.foodinsight.org/Newsletter

Black Pepper as a Functional Food

The role of spices in foods is getting another look besides adding flavor to foods. Spices and herbs are being researched for their functional food properties.

Black pepper contains a substance called piperine. A recent study published in the J. of Agricultural and Food Chemistry showed that piperine and black pepper extract can block new fat cell formation in mice. This could lead to a potential use in humans to reduce obesity-related diseases.

Source: http://pubs.acs.org/doi/epdf/10.1021/jf204514a

New Appliance from Ball®

In efforts to make home food preservation easy, Jarden Home Brands has launched a new appliance to help take the guesswork and worries out of canning. They call it the FreshTECH Automatic Home Canning System using SmartPRE-SERVE Technology.

The device is for recipes designed for this appliance. Recipes include jams, jellies, sauces, tomatoes, salsas, fruits and pickles. It is designed to preserve foods 30% faster. It is a stand alone appliance so no stovetop is needed.

The appliance includes a jar lifter, jar rack and instruction book. It costs $299.95.

With a fun name like this, they have to be good! Aebleskivers (or Ebleskivers) are a Danish type of pancake made in a special pan and are round. Typically served during the holidays, aebleskivers are served with powdered sugar, whipped cream, butter, maple syrup or fruit preserves.

Aebleskiver pans date back 300 years and were made from copper.

History states that when the Vikings returned from battle, they used their dented helmets as aebleskiver pans over a hot fire.

Source: [http://aebleskivers.com/history.html](http://aebleskivers.com/history.html)